

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 SS-15 SSO-00 SP-02 NSCE-00
MCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00 EB-08
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O 191730Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3047
INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SANA IMMEDIATE
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE
USMTM/DCR RIYADH IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 6037

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, US
SUBJ: US/SAUDI SUPPORT FOR YAR: RESPONSE TO SULTAN

REF: (A) STATE 209866 180052Z AUG 78 (NOTAL)
(B) STATE 208508 162325Z AUG 78 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: I SPENT AN HOUR AND A HALF TRYING TO CONVINCE
MIN DEF PRINCE SULTAN OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF U.S. COMMIT-
MENT TO YEMEN AND TRYING TO EXPLAIN TO HIM THE POLITICAL
COMPLEXITIES IN THE U.S. WHICH PREVENTED OUR GOING
FURTHER AT THIS TIME THAN THE JOINT SAUDI-U.S. PROGRAM
PREVIOUSLY WORKED OUT AND PRESENTED TO YARG. PRINCE
SULTAN SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND AND WANTED TO BELIEVE WHAT
I TOLD HIM. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT THINK HE WOULD BE ABLE
TO PERSUADE YARG UNAIDED. HE SUGGESTED DISPATCH OF SPE-
CIAL U.S. EMISSARY TO PREPARE THE WAY WITH PRESIDENT SALIH
FOR FURTHER EFFORTS BY SAG TO PERSUADE HIM THAT USG IS
SERIOUS IN ITS COMMITMENT TO YAR. END SUMMARY.

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1. I DISCUSSED YAR SUPPORT PROGRAM WITH MIN DEF PRINCE
SULTAN DURING HOUR AND HALF MEETING ON AUGUST 19. MEET-
ING WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY CHUSMTM BGEN CATHEY, DEPUTY
CHUSMTM COL MEYER, SPECIAL COUNSELOR ISA SABBAGH AND
POL COUNSELOR BOVIS.

2. I OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT I ASSUMED

PRINCE SULTAN WAS AS DISAPPOINTED AS I THAT YAR PRESIDENT SALIH DID NOT ACCEPT THE JOINT SAUDI-U.S. PROGRAM WHICH WE HAD SO CAREFULLY WORKED OUT AND PRESENTED TO YARG. PRINCE SULTAN SAID HE SHARED THAT DISAPPOINTMENT BUT THAT HE PLACED PART OF THE BLAME ON HIMSELF. I SAID THAT PERHAPS BOTH U.S. AND SAUDI ARABIA WERE AT FAULT IN THAT WE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO EXPLAIN SATISFACTORILY TO YARG THE AMERICAN SYSTEM AND ITS POLITICAL COMPLEXITIES. WE HAD ALSO BEEN UNABLE TO GET ACROSS THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE POLITICAL COMMITMENT THE U.S. WAS MAKING TO YARG. I SAID WE APPRECIATED THE INTENSE PRESSURES UNDER WHICH YAR LEADERSHIP WAS WORKING AND THAT WE UNDERSTOOD PRESIDENT SALIH'S DESIRE TO SEE A MASSIVE INFLUX OF U.S./SAUDI MILITARY ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, IT IS OUR VIEW THAT THE PHASED PROPOSAL WHICH WE HAVE DEVELOPED JOINTLY IS THE BEST WAY TO PROCEED AT THIS TIME. WE WERE NOW SEEKING HRH'S ADVICE AND HELP IN MAKING THIS POINT TO THE YARG AND MAKING THE YAR LEADERSHIP UNDERSTAND THAT THE U.S. POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO THE YAR WAS REAL AND MEANINGFUL. WE WOULD, WHEN THE TIME CAME, BE WILLING TO CONSIDER FURTHER STEPS THAT WE MIGHT TAKE TO HELP YARG DEVELOP ITS DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES. I STRESSED TO PRINCE SULTAN THAT THE U.S. WISHED TO WORK VERY CLOSELY WITH SAG AND THAT WE WOULD CONSULT CLOSELY AS THE PROGRAM DEVELOPED. PRINCE SULTAN'S HELP IN EXPLAINING TO THE YAR WHAT WE HAVE AGREED TO DO WOULD BE VERY USEFUL. HE WAS VERY FAMILIAR WITH THE POLICIAL
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SITUATION IN THE U.S., HAVING JUST EXPERIENCED THE PROBLEMS WE HAD IN GETTING THE F-15 PROGRAM THROUGH CONGRESS. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE YAR ALSO UNDERSTAND THIS PROBLEM.

3. ON THE QUESTION OF FUNDING, I EXPLAINED TO PRINCE SULTAN THAT WE COULD NOT AT THIS TIME GIVE ANY HOPE TO SAG OR TO THE YARG THAT USG WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROGRAM OTHER THAN WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY COMMITTED OURSELVES TO DO. THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY WOULD BE IN FISCAL YEAR 1980, SOME 13 MONTHS AWAY. EVEN THEN WE COULD NOT PROMISE THERE WOULD BE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FORTHCOMING.

4. I SAID THAT ONE ISSUE THAT WE MUST RESOLVE IMMEDIATELY IS WHETHER YARG STILL WANTS THE PHASED PROGRAM THAT THE U.S. AND SAUDI ARABIA HAVE PROPOSED. TIME IS PASSING VERY QUICKLY AND IF WE ARE TO CARRY OUT THE HIGH IMPACT PORTION OF THE PROGRAM IN TIME FOR THE NATIONAL DAY PARADE IN YEMEN, WE NEED TO KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I CLOSED BY EMPHASIZING ONCE MORE THAT I HAD BEEN SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED TO ASSURE PRINCE SULTAN AND THE SAG THAT THE U.S. WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH SAUDI ARABIA ON THE PHASED PRO-

GRAM AND ON THE FEASIBILITY OF PROVIDING APPROPRIATE TYPES
AND QUANTITIES OF ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT AS THE PROGRAM EVOLVES.

5. PRINCE SULTAN THANKED ME FOR MY PRESENTATION. HE SAID
THAT HE WANTED FIRST TO ADDRESS THE REQUEST THAT I HAD MADE
TO EXPLAIN TO PRESIDENT SALIH THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE U.S.
COMMITMENT TO THE YAR. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN TRYING TO
PERSUADE YAR SINCE THE TIME OF PRESIDENT HAMDY TO GET RID
OF SOVIETS AND THAT THE U.S. WOULD BE WILLING TO ASSIST THE
YAR BUT THAT THE YAR WOULD HAVE TO BE PATIENT AND ALLOW
THE U.S. TIME TO UNDERSTAND ITS OWN INTERESTS IN THE YAR.
HE HAD ALSO TAKEN THE SAME LINE WITH GHASHMI. PRINCE SUL-
TAN SAID THAT THINGS HAVE NOW CHANGED IN THE TWO YEMENS
AND THE LIST OF PRIORITIES HAS CHANGED. THE DANGER IS
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GREATER. THE PRESIDENTS IN BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN ASSASSI-
NATED. THE RUSSIANS ARE IN PDRY IN FULL FORCE. HE SAID
HE RECEIVED ALMOST DAILY MESSAGES FROM PRESIDENT SALIH TEL-
LING HIM HOW THE PRESSURES ON HIM WERE MOUNTING. THE
RUSSIANS ARE TELLING HIM THAT THEY ARE PRESSURING THE
PDRY TO PUNISH PRESIDENT GHASHMI'S MURDERERS.

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THE SOVIETS ARE ALSO TELLING YARG THAT THEY ARE STILL WILLING TO GO FORWARD WITH THEIR MILITARY PROGRAM IN YAR AND THEY ARE ASKING PRESIDENT SALIH IF HE DOES NOT THINK THAT HE STILL NEEDS THE PROGRAM. HE SAID PRESIDENT SALIH WAS NOW ASKING HIM WHAT TO DO. SALIH SAYS THAT HE IS TRYING TO HOLD THE RUSSIANS AT A DISTANCE BUT HE CANNOT HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER WITHOUT SOME SUPPORT. SULTAN THEN ADDED THAT SOVIETS WERE MORE ALERT TO THE OPPORTUNITIES SERVING THEIR INTERESTS IN THE AREA THAN U.S. SEEMS TO BE. WITNESS THE DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN, THE HORN OF AFRICA, PDRY, AND NOW IRAN.

6. PRINCE SULTAN WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD POSTPONED THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT SALIH ANOTHER TWO OR THREE DAYS. HE IS AFRAID OF THE QUESTIONS THAT SALIH WILL ASK OF THE KING, THE CROWN PRINCE, AND HIMSELF IF HE WERE TO COME NOW. SALIH WILL TELL THEM THAT HE IS TRYING TO DRIVE OUT THE COMMUNISTS BUT HE NEEDS THE WHEREWITHALL TO DO SO. HE WILL SAY THAT HE IS IN A PREDICAMENT AND HE WILL ASK WHAT SAUDI ARABIA CAN DO TO HELP. PRINCE SULTAN THEN ASKED RHETOR-

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ICALLY WHAT REPLY SAUDI ARABIA COULD GIVE SALIH. SHOULD HE TELL SALIH THAT SAG IS POWERLESS AND THAT SALIH SHOULD GET MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM THE RUSSIANS? IN THAT CASE AND WITHIN BUT A FEW MONTHS THERE WOULD BE ANOTHER ASSASSINATION AND SALIH WOULD GO. THERE WOULD THEN BE A UNION BETWEEN THE YAR AND THE PDRY. PRINCE SULTAN STRESSED THAT HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE EXPLANATION WHICH I HAD GIVEN HIM BUT HE SAID THAT YAR HAD A RAZOR TO ITS THROAT. WE CANNOT ASK HIM TO BE CALM IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.

7. I SAID THAT I RECOGNIZED THE DILEMMA WHICH PRINCE SULTAN AND SAG FACED. WITH HIS PERMISSION I WOULD TRY TO SUGGEST A METHOD OF PERSUADING THE YARG OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT. I HOPED THAT PRINCE SULTAN WOULD BE ABLE TO SAY THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAD FOUND ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH THE U.S. TO BE BENEFICIAL. LIKE A MARRIAGE, AS PEOPLE GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER, THE BONDS THAT BIND GET STRONGER. AS SAUDI ARABIA AND THE U.S. HAVE COME TO KNOW EACH OTHER IN THIS PARTNERSHIP, THE BONDS THAT BIND OUR TWO COUNTRIES HAVE INDEED GOTTEN STRONGER. I HOPED ALSO THAT PRINCE SULTAN COULD SAY THAT, IN HIS EXPERIENCE WITH THE U.S., SAUDI ARABIA HAD FOUND THAT THE U.S. PROMISED LITTLE BUT ALWAYS DELIVERED MORE. THE U.S. IS TRUSTWORTHY AND WILL NOT ONLY DO WHAT IT PROMISES BUT WILL DO EVEN MORE FOR A TRUE FRIEND.

8. I SAID THAT THE SECOND ARGUMENT PRINCE SULTAN COULD

USE WOULD BE A NEGATIVE ONE. HE MIGHT POSE THE QUESTION TO PRESIDENT SALIH AS TO WHOSE BENEFIT THE SOVIET WEAPONS IN THE YAR WOULD BE USED. HE MIGHT ALSO POINT OUT TO PRESIDENT SALIH THE CONTINUED CONTROL THAT THE USSR HAS ATTEMPTED TO MAINTAIN ON ARMS IN THE YAR. HE MIGHT EVEN SUGGEST TO PRESIDENT SALIH THAT PERHAPS THIS IS ONE REASON HE IS SECRET

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SO CONCERNED. SOVIET ARMS ARE A TROJAN HORSE IN THE YAR. BY CONTRAST, ASSISTANCE FROM SAUDI ARABIA AND THE U.S. IS UNSELFISH. PRESIDENT SALIH WILL NEVER HAVE TO BE CONCERNED THAT THE TANKS WE PROVIDE WILL BE TURNED AGAINST HIM THE WAY THE TANKS IN THE PDYR WERE TURNED AGAINST HIS BROTHER SALIM RUBAYI' ALI A FEW WEEKS AGO.

9. I ASSURED THE PRINCE THAT WE WOULD DO EVERYTHING WE COULD TO GIVE HIM PROPER SUPPORT. I EXPLAINED THAT GENERAL CATHEY WAS GOING BACK TO THE U.S. THE FOLLOWING DAY WITH THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE BRIEFING EVER PUT TOGETHER TO SHOW OUR LEADERS THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SOVIET THREAT. I SAID THAT IN SUM, THE U.S. IS MAKING A STRONG COMMITMENT. I HOPED PRINCE SULTAN COULD TRANSMIT TO THE YARG THE FULL FLAVOR AND FULL MEANING OF THAT COMMITMENT.

10. PRINCE SULTAN SAID THAT HE HAD NO DOUBT OF MY ENTHUSIASM OR OF GENERAL CATHEY'S EFFORTS. HE HOPED THAT THEY WOULD CONTINUE. HE WANTED, HOWEVER, TO SAY TWO THINGS. FIRST, HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY USEFUL IF PRESIDENT CARTER COULD SEND A SPECIAL EMISSARY TO THE YAR TO ENGAGE IN A HAND-HOLDING OPERATION FOR PRESIDENT SALIH. HE HOPED THAT THIS EMISSARY WOULD GO TO SANA BEFORE SALIH CAME TO SAUDI ARABIA. WHEN SALIH COMES TO SAUDI ARABIA HE, PRINCE SULTAN, WOULD THEN BACK UP AND SUPPORT WHAT THE SPECIAL EMISSARY HAD SAID TO THE YARG ABOUT THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT. PRINCE SULTAN SUGGESTED THAT I MIGHT GO AS THE PRESIDENT'S EMISSARY. HE SAID THAT I COULD CARRY A LETTER AND EXPLAIN TO PRESIDENT SALIH WHAT I HAD EXPLAINED TO HIM.

11. PRINCE SULTAN SAID THAT SECOND MATTER HE WISHED TO MENTION WAS THE LETTER FROM KING KHALID TO PRESIDENT CARTER. HE ASKED IF IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO EXPEDITE THE LETTER. I SAID THAT I DID NOT THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO EXPEDITE IT AT THIS TIME. I SUGGESTED THAT HE POSTPONE IT UNTIL SECRET

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WE SEE WHAT COMES OF HIS SUGGESTION FOR A SPECIAL EMISSARY.

12. PRINCE SULTAN CLOSED THE MEETING BY NOTING THAT ON THE NIGHT OF DESTINY, WHICH FALLS NEAR THE END OF RAMADAN, EVERY GOOD MUSLIM MAKES HIS WISH FOR THE YEAR. HE SAID THAT HIS WISH WOULD BE THAT HE WILL NOT FIND HIMSELF FRUSTRATED BY THE POLITICAL COMPLEXITIES OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEM ON THE ONE HAND AND BY THE DESPERATE NEEDS OF OUR YAR FRIENDS ON THE OTHER.

13. COMMENT: PRINCE SULTAN IS OBVIOUSLY NERVOUS ABOUT FACING PRESIDENT SALIH. I THINK THAT IDEA OF EMISSARY HAS MERIT. I SEE THREE POSSIBILITIES:

(A) DISPATCH OF AN EMISSARY FROM WASHINGTON. EMISSARY SHOULD BE SOMEONE WITH STATUS, PRESTIGE, AND PERSUASIVE ABILITY.

(B) DESIGNATION OF CONGRESSMAN SIKES OR FLYNT AS EMISSARY.

(C) DESIGNATION OF ME AS EMISSARY, AS PER SULTAN'S SUGGESTION. (FYI: I HAD PLANNED A BRIEF UNOFFICIAL TRIP TO SANA DURING RAMADAN IN RESPONSE TO AN INVITATION FROM DAVE RANSOM. HAD DISCUSSED IT WITH JOE TWINAM WHO SAW NO OBJECTIONS.)

14. EMISSARY DESIGNATED SHOULD HAVE PREFERABLY A WRITTEN MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT FOR PRESENTATION AT TIME OF HIS CALL ON PRESIDENT SALIH.
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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 19 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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